

Summarised inspection findings

Braemar Primary School Nursery Class

Aberdeenshire Council

27 February 2024

Key contextual information

Braemar Nursery is part of Braemar Primary School in Aberdeenshire. The setting has one large playroom, free flow access to outdoors and access to the wider school building and grounds. Children attend from Braemar and the surrounding areas. The setting operates during term time with children receiving their entitlement to 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) attending 9.00 am to 3.00 pm. The setting is registered for 24 children aged from two to those not yet attending school. At the time of inspection, the setting had six children on the roll. The early years senior practitioner (EYSP) has overall responsibility for Braemar Nursery and nearby Ballater Nursery. She is supported by a full-time early years lead practitioner (EYLP), one full-time early years practitioner (EYP), one part-time EYP and a part-time early years support worker (EYSW). The headteacher works in partnership with the ELC team and has a strategic overview of the setting.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The team, led by the senior practitioner, have a shared vision for the continued development and improvement of the setting. The vision, values and aims are reviewed annually, and where necessary, refreshed to ensure they reflect the aspirations of children, parents, and practitioners. Children are increasingly aware of the values. Practitioners should continue to share the values in meaningful and relevant ways with all children. There have been ongoing improvements to the quality of children's experience at Braemar Nursery. The team have ensured that national guidance and current thinking underpin this. The senior practitioner provides a positive role model for practitioners and is central to the well-developed personal and professional commitment of the team. She recognises what is important for the setting and with the team, identifies well-judged priorities for continuous improvement.
- Practitioners are very professional and work well as a team to get it right for all children. They have benefitted from a range of professional learning opportunities, both in the ELC setting and as part of the school. Recent learning has impacted positively on how they support children with their emotions and challenge children in literacy. As a team, professional reading and discussion has supported well-informed improvements, including a change in pedagogy to a more child-led approach. Practitioners are reflective of the changes they have made and recognise how children are benefitting. They have visited other settings to explore what high-quality ELC involves. These visits have informed developments and motivate and inspire practitioners. Practitioners should continue to reflect on and develop their practice to sustain the pace of change.
- Practitioners are developing leadership roles across the setting, for example responsibility for developing and managing spaces in the playroom. Children have leadership responsibilities including leading nature days for their parents, carrying out routines and assessing risk in the

playroom. There is capacity for practitioners and children to lead and take forward more improvements to share the process and leadership of change.

- The senior practitioner, supported by visiting staff from Aberdeenshire Council and the headteacher, has managed and implemented change successfully. The ELC team continue to develop their confidence in their contribution to the process of change. An action plan with relevant and well-considered priorities for improvement is in place. Practitioners are beginning to use formal self-evaluation tools to reflect on the quality of their provision. This is supporting staff well to monitor and evaluate the impact of the changes made. As the use of self-evaluation continues to develop, this should inform priorities that reflect a shared agenda for continued improvement. Children could also be more involved in evaluating the quality of their experience.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Practitioners have created a strong ethos that demonstrates a commitment to children's rights. Relationships between adults and children are consistently nurturing. As a result, children feel valued, safe and secure. They are confident and increasingly responsible. Practitioners model respect through the value they place on the child's voice by seeking and responding to their views and thoughts across the day. Children are kind and caring towards each other.
- Practitioners have become more responsive to the interests and learning needs of children. Children engage well with a range of experiences that are an effective blend of adult-initiated and child-led experiences. Practitioners have developed attractive spaces, both indoors and outdoors and children have access to a range of interesting resources. Practitioners have reviewed resources, for example increased the use of open ended and natural resources. They plan to develop this further with a focus on promoting curiosity. These developments are supporting children to extend and sustain their engagement increasingly and become absorbed in their play. Children can make choices in their play. This is helping develop the child's role in leading their own learning.
- Practitioner's interactions with children are calm and sensitive, promoting confidence and self-esteem. Working as a team, they have explored, and continue to develop, high quality questioning. They recognise the importance of knowing when to intervene and when to step back from children's learning. As a result, practitioners are supporting and extending children's learning more effectively and should continue to embed these approaches across the team. They should now explore and develop the role of the adult in child-led learning. This should have a focus on promoting pace and challenge. Children access a range of digital technology to enhance and support their learning. Practitioners are keen to continue to develop this, for example to support children's independent access to online learning journals.
- Practitioners have extensive knowledge of children as individuals and increasingly as learners. They make high quality observations of children's learning that inform what children know, what they can do and what they need to learn next. Practitioners should develop their observation focus to include all areas of the curriculum. All children have online learning journals that document their learning. They enjoy reviewing their journal and reflecting on their experiences.
- Practitioners use a range of approaches to plan for, assess and record children's progress. Children are involved in planning for their learning through discussion and recording in floor books. Practitioners plan to meet the needs of children using a very personalised approach. They should ensure that all opportunities for learning are maximised and include appropriate depth. Practitioners have recently introduced more robust approaches to monitor children's progress at key points across the year. This is at the early stages of use but is beginning to

identify where children may have potential barriers to their learning or require additional challenge.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners provide a curriculum that is well matched to the context of the setting. They take full account of information shared from home and their initial assessments to ensure children's interests and prior learning are built upon. This includes extensive use of the natural environment and the local community. They are keen to develop this further and have plans to do so.
- Practitioners have used national practice guidance, 'Realising the Ambition: Being Me', to refresh their pedagogy and understanding of child development. They make use of developmental milestones and progression pathways to promote continuity and progression across the curriculum. As planned, practitioners should work with staff across the early level to provide well-considered transitions that are responsive to the needs of individuals. This should focus on sharing of skills and pedagogy to ensure children make sustained progress as they move across the early level and beyond.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have very positive relationships with parents. They have daily communication with families, building on their open door policy. They provide regular updates about children's learning and events in the setting. Parents have access to learning journals and can share their child's learning from home. This allows a partnership approach to supporting children's learning and development needs.
- Following the pandemic practitioners are working hard to reestablish family involvement in children's learning and nurture parental partnership. This includes 'stay and play' sessions, open invitation to share skills and occupations, and invitations to join nature days. The local toddler group, 'Braemar Bairns', visit monthly to share the ELC experience. This supports effective transitions when children start their ELC place. Practitioners also plan in visiting professionals to ensure families can access, for example, dental health support, within the rural community. Building on existing positive relationships, practitioners should progress plans to develop family learning opportunities.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The setting submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Ensuring wellbeing and getting it right for children and families is a strength of the setting. Practitioners demonstrate a high level of care and respect for children. This underpins the family-like ethos of the setting. The recent professional learning focus on emotional wellbeing has heightened the awareness of practitioners and how they support and interact with children. As a result, children are increasingly able to self-regulate their emotions and use relevant vocabulary and pictures to express how they feel. Practitioners should continue to support children to resolve conflict independently.
- Children are developing an appropriate understanding of the national wellbeing indicators. Practitioners use associated language and motivating characters to recognise and celebrate children's achievements. This is building children's confidence and self-esteem. Children are beginning to understand they have rights and have created a nursery charter to promote a shared understanding of their rights. Practitioners should continue to support children to be aware of their rights by promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in meaningful ways.
- Children benefit from, and enjoy, the freedom of outdoor spaces, in the garden, the school grounds and the local community. They are curious and enjoy exploring the natural world. Practitioners promote the development of resilience, stamina and perseverance and children are proud of their achievements, such as climbing local hills. Children are aware of how they can keep themselves safe and regularly work with adults to assess potential risks in their environment.
- Children are aware of healthy food choices and are beginning to explore different food groups as they try new foods. They understand the need to stay well hydrated. They are independent in routines such as during their snack and lunch times where they serve themselves and take on responsibilities such as setting the table. Practitioners model and encourage good table manners and respect for others by eating alongside the children. This results in a relaxed and quality dining experience.
- All practitioners understand their statutory duties and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Appropriate plans, developed with parents, are in place to ensure the individual care and learning needs of children are met. Practitioners are proactive in seeking advice from other professionals when required. This promotes a partnership approach to meeting needs and removes potential barriers to learning successfully.
- Practitioners have created a very inclusive ethos. Children learn in a climate of mutual respect where they value each other and their different interests and life experiences. Practitioners should promote further children's understanding of being global citizens to develop their knowledge of diversity out with their immediate experience.

3.2 Securing children's progress

good

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success.

The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Children are making good progress in early language and communication. They listen very well to adults and each other, enjoying stories being read to them. Children are familiar with traditional tales and can articulate what they like about a story. They are now ready for more in-depth exploration of texts. A few children use, and benefit from, visuals and signing to support their understanding and help them share their needs. Most children use a well-developed range of vocabulary to share their ideas and would benefit from increased challenge to extend this further. They recognise their name confidently and a few are beginning to identify letter names and their associated sounds. Opportunities for mark making are supporting children to explore early writing in different contexts. A few children show particular interest in creating their own stories through their detailed drawings and adult scribing.
- Children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They apply their understanding of number as they count and recognise numerals in routines. A few children would benefit from the challenge of exploring larger numbers. As children build with blocks they explore and describe properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They understand how money is used and are beginning to recognise the value of different coins. A few children show interest and developing understanding of simple fractions, time, and measure. Children could be developing understanding of information handling.
- Children's progress in health and wellbeing is good. Using a planned programme, children are developing an understanding of their emotions and strategies to help regulate their emotions. They are very independent in routines. Children have well developed gross and fine motor control and are well-supported to develop stamina and perseverance. They demonstrate responsibility in assessing and addressing potential risks for younger children visiting with 'Braemar Bairns'.
- Children, including those who have potential barriers to their learning, are making good progress over time. Practitioners' individual approach to support is helping a few children make accelerated progress. They should now consider how more able children could be challenged further in their learning in the ELC.
- Staff recognise and celebrate children's successes and achievements well through praise and encouragement. Attractive displays and learning journals document children's achievements. Children are becoming responsible citizens and effective contributors as they develop their understanding of recycling and caring for the natural world. Practitioners should progress their

plans to develop links in the community, both locally and more widely, to allow children to contribute in creative and exciting ways.

- Practitioners have a very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of children and families. They understand the unique challenges within their local community and work hard to provide an inclusive ethos that promotes equity. Practitioners, working with senior leaders, should now make more effective use of all available data and information, including that relating to socio-economic backgrounds. This will help plan support and provide well-considered interventions to ensure all children make the very best progress.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.